



Sample PTA Newsletter Article for 6th Grade

Parents – do you have a rising 6th grader?

If so, you need to know about the immunization requirement for 6th grade entry. A booster dose of Tdap vaccine is required for all children attending public school who are entering the 6th grade on or after August 1, 2008, if five years or more have passed since their last dose of tetanus/diphtheria toxoid.

Students **not** attending public school, (i.e., private, home-school, non-traditional schools) who are 12 years of age on or after August 1, 2008, are required to receive one booster dose of Tdap vaccine, if five years or more have passed since their last dose of tetanus/diphtheria toxoid.

Tdap is a combination vaccine that provides protection against three diseases: tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. There has been an increase in pertussis cases in North Carolina and in the U.S. in recent years, making vaccination imperative. Tdap is recommended for all teenagers beginning at age 11 or 12. It is also recommended that adults receive a dose of Tdap to replace their next tetanus booster. Your child is now required to receive this vaccine prior to 6th grade entry.

The vaccine is safe and effective. The most common side effects are pain and swelling at the site of injection. While the vaccine does not cause serious side effects, some people

feel tired or experience headaches. Tdap has been shown to decrease the incidence of pertussis by 90 percent.

Contact your child's health care provider or local health department to schedule an appointment to receive the vaccine. If your child is insured, the insurance may cover the costs of the vaccine. If your child is 18 years of age or younger, and meets one of the following qualifications, he or she is eligible to receive the vaccine from the state at no cost:

- ▶ Is eligible for Medicaid,
- ▶ Has no health insurance,
- ▶ Is Native American or Alaskan Native, or
- ▶ Has health insurance, but it does not cover the cost of vaccine.

While at your doctor's office, ask about other vaccines your child might need. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following vaccines for this age group: Meningococcal, Hepatitis A, Human Papillomavirus (HPV), Flu and a second dose of Varicella (chickenpox). These vaccines are not required by law, but are strongly recommended for adolescents.

Talk to your school's nurse, your health care provider, or your local health department to learn more. You can also contact the NC Immunization Branch at **(919) 707-5550** or go on line at **www.immunize.nc.gov** for more information.



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